

WILL IT BE THE THIRD TIME FOR GOOD?

## “Diplomat” Bernardo Lidimba, Nyusi’s third choice for the secret services in five years

- Bernardo Lidimba succeeds General Júlio Jane as head of SISE. During the four years and seven months that he served as General Director, Julio Jane “saw” the expansion of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado, with the taking and occupation of district headquarters, including the municipal town of Mocímboa da Praia. Lidimba is the third General Director of SISE appointed by Filipe Nyusi, after Generals Julio Jane and Henriques Lagos Lidimo. Before becoming director of the secret services, Lidimba was head of state protocol and later Mozambique’s high commissioner to Kenya.

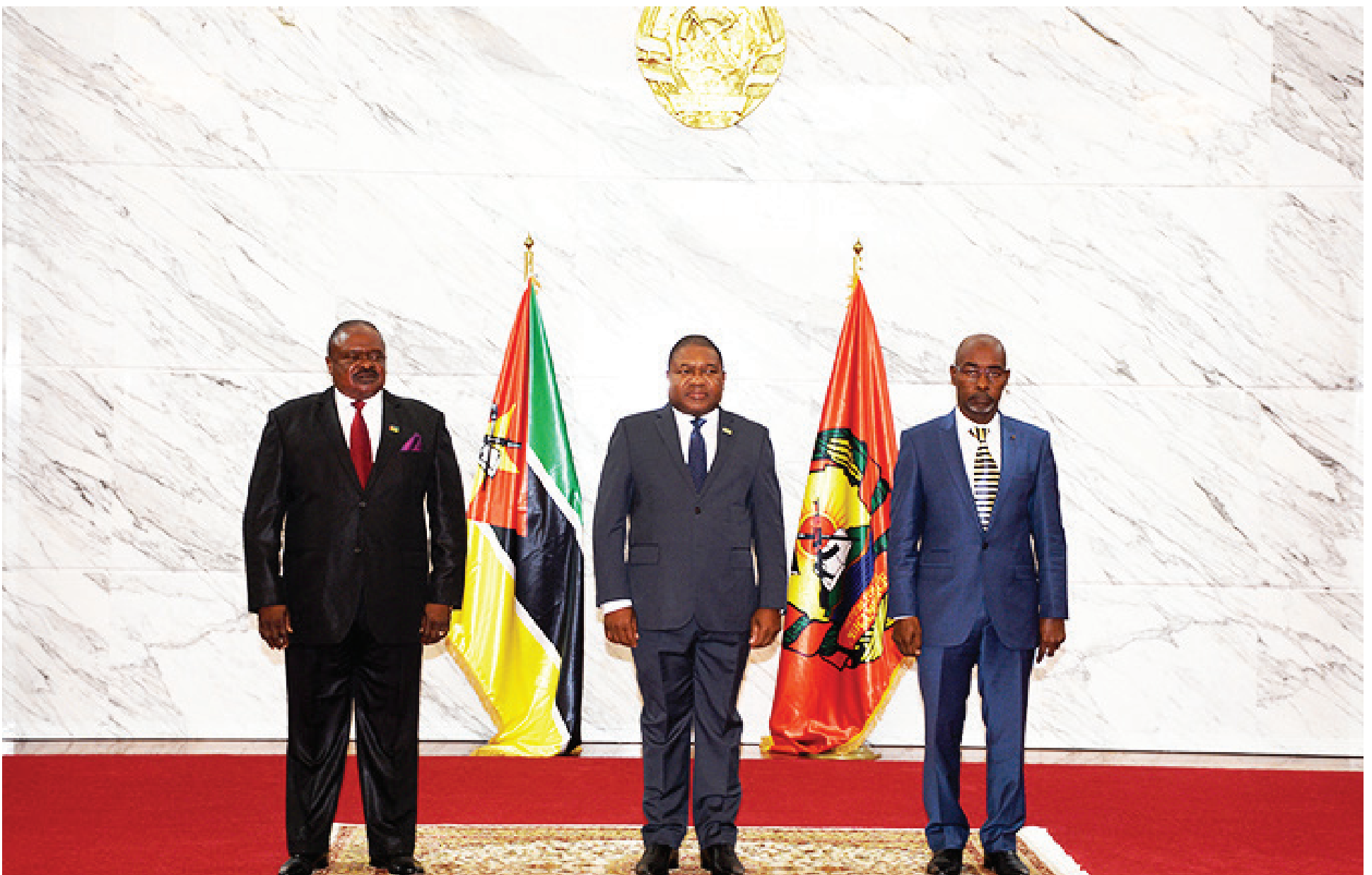


Lagos Lidimo

Júlio Jane

Bernardo Lidimba

- The new General Director of SISE will have as deputy a man from the house: Joia Haquirene, a member of the secret services since 1978, where he held several positions, including National Director of Counter-Intelligence. On 29 October 2021, Haquirene was heard in the 'hidden debts' trial as a declarant, the first to be questioned. To what extent will the secret services led by the pair Lidimba/Haquirene contribute with relevant information to curb the upsurge of insurgent attacks in Cabo Delgado and other crimes that put state security at home? That is the question.



From left to right: Bernardo Lidimba (General Director of SISE); Filipe Nyusi (Head of State); Joia Haquirene (SISE Deputy Director)

In January 2017, two years after taking office for his first term as President of the Republic (2015 - 2019), Filipe Nyusi made the first move in the management of the State Intelligence and Security Service (SISE), replacing Gregório Leão with Henriques Lagos Lidimo, a well-known general who headed the General Staff of Mozambique's Armed Defence Forces between 1994 and 2008.

The 2017 move came as no surprise: Gregório Leão had been in charge of SISE for about 12 years, after reaching the post of General Director in May 2005, by the hand of Armando Guebuza, former President of the Republic. Nyusi needed to put a man of his confidence at the head of the intelligence services, an entirely understandable need.

The second reason was related to the "hidden debts", the biggest financial scandal in independent Mozambique. The SISE directorate was responsible for the creation of ProIndicus, EMATUM and MAM, and for contracting the illegal loans worth two billion dollars in favour of the three companies. This was in the years 2013 and 2014. The money was supposed to finance the security project to monitor and protect Mozambique's Exclusive Economic Zone, but much of it had been embezzled. There were no conditions for Gregório Leão to continue in office.

In fact, Gregório Leão's name was already being quoted as being one of those responsible for the default, so his removal was justified to allow the audit of the "hidden

debts" led by the British consultancy Kroll to run smoothly. Two years later, i.e. in February 2019, Gregório Leão was arrested and is now awaiting sentencing for the "hidden debts" trial in pre-trial detention.

General Henriques Lagos Lidimo did not stay long at the head of SISE. He was exonerated in October 2017, after serving nine months in the post. And he left the secret service days after the first attack by violent extremists in the municipal village of Mocimboa da Praia, a phenomenon that inexplicably took all the Defence and Security Forces by surprise, judging by the lack of response strategy, including the underestimation of the threat to national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As a replacement, Júlio Jane, a general in the Armed Forces who had been serving as General Commander of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) since March 2016, was summoned. Before arriving at the General Command of the Police, Júlio Jane served as Commander of the Civic Service of Mozambique.

For the time that Júlio Jane remained in office (four years and seven and months), it seemed that Nyusi had found his right man to head the secret services. However, on the night of Tuesday 31 May, the President of the Republic once again moved in the management of SISE, dismissing General Jane, with five months left to complete five years. As usual, the reasons for the changes were not justified.

It was during Julio Jane's "consulate" that the armed conflict in Cabo Delgado expanded to more districts and caused the worst humanitarian crisis of the last decades, with more than 800,000 people displaced. The district headquarters of Quissanga, Namacande (Muidumbe), Macomia, Palma and the municipal village of Mocímboa da Praia were assaulted and temporarily occupied by violent extremists when Jane was leading SISE. A clear sign that the intelligence services were not able to anticipate coordinated and

large-scale attacks, helping to minimize their impact on the civilian population. The brutal attack on the town of Palma in March 2021 is a paradigmatic example of this.

Nyusi's third choice to head the secret services is Bernardo Lidimba, a man of diplomacy who knows the corridors of security. In March 2016, when Nyusi had only a year and two months in the Presidency of the Republic, he appointed Bernardo Lidimba as Head of State Protocol, replacing Cristóvão Jossias Gemo, who had been in the post since 2014.

The Head of State Protocol heads the Office of State Protocol, an institution subordinate to the Presidency of the Republic and responsible, among other functions, for preparing and proposing the approval of the national protocol list; ensuring the implementation of the rules of State protocol; organising the official ceremonies of the State, the visits of the President of the Republic, inside and outside the country; the visits of foreign Heads of State and/or Governments and other foreign personalities at the invitation of the President of the Republic; supporting the diplomatic and consular missions of the President of the Republic; and the organisation of the official ceremonies of the State;

organizing the visits of the President of the Republic, inside and outside the country; or-

ganizing the visits of foreign Heads of State and/or Governments and other foreign personalities, at the invitation of the President of the Republic; supporting the diplomatic and consular corps accredited in Mozambique in the performance of their functions; organizing the ceremonies for the presentation of credential letters of the new ambassadors.

It was only two years that Bernardo Lidimba served as Head of State Protocol. In February 2018 he swapped Maputo for Nairobi, where he went to serve as Mozambique's High Commissioner to Kenya. His presence in Nairobi did not last three years. It ended in December 2020, when he was replaced by Jerónimo Chivavi, the current High Commissioner of Mozambique in Kenya.

Bernardo Lidimba arrives at SISE at a troubled time: after a strong offensive by the joint troops of Mozambique, Rwanda and SADC, insurgents appear to be reorganising and intensifying attacks against civilians, including vehicles, in the districts of Macomia, Meluco, Nangade and Palma. The beheadings of civilians that seemed to be history have once again alarmed the populations who have returned to their areas of origin. To what extent will the secret services contribute relevant information to contain the advance of the insurgents? That is the question.

## Joia Haquirene: Former Director of Counterintelligence and "hidden debts" trial declarant promoted to Deputy Director of SISE

Bernardo Lidimba will have a man from the house as deputy: Joia Haquirene is a member of the secret services since 1978 and has held several posts, including National Director of Counterintelligence of the SISE. On 29 October 2021, Joia Haquirene was heard in the "hidden debts" trial as a declarant, and was the first to be questioned.

During the hearing, he confirmed that he was the SISE representative at GIPS, a company linked to the secret services. He was appointed to GIPS by the former General Director of the secret services, Gregório Leão. He did not contribute anything towards the 30% share subscription, nor did he has any earnings at GIPS, because he was at the company representing SISE. The social services of the Mozambican secret controlled 70% of the company's capital, while SISE had 30%. GIPS was set up in December 2011, with the aim of developing economic activities to generate funds.

He recounted that in 2013 he received superior orders to stop being a partner in GIPS. "My colleagues told me that I should give up my share to GIPS because there were some



partners or investors interested in partnering with the company, but they would not like to do so existing a singular shareholder. I signed a document renouncing my shareholding in favour of GIPS. Initially, Joia Haquirine acted as executive director of GIPS, but said he did not follow the day-to-day running of the company. "After the appointment of an executive director of the company, I became a non-executive director until my quota was waived.

The only relevant administrative act he remembers performing as executive director of GIPS is signing company cheques, including some intended to pay for ProIndicus and EMATUM expenses. "The first time I was

brought cheques to sign, I did not make copies. But the second time I made copies because I saw high amounts that made me scared: they were cheques for 10 and 20 million meticais in favour of ProIndicus. The third and last time I was asked to sign cheques, I also made copies. And before signing them I always consulted the General Director and he always gave me a positive answer". Jóia Haquirine said he signed cheques at the time when his colleague Raufo Ismal Irá, also executive director of GIPS, was out of the country for health reasons.

Haquirene told the court that he had never heard of the Mozambique Exclusive Econo-


mic Zone Monitoring and Protection System, but confirmed having signed the ProIndicus share capital subscription on behalf of shareholder GIPS. "I would find the documentation already done and they would say there are orders to sign. I didn't worry about what the documents were for, I only signed documents as a GIPS director. I did this because I was convinced that it was in the interest of SISE and of the security of the country. This is how we work in SISE". He said that he did not remember anyone informing him of the steps towards the creation of other companies in which GIPS had a stake, namely EMATUM and MAM.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

**Property:** CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento  
**Director:** Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  
**Editor:** Emídio Beula  
**Author:** Emídio Beula  
**Team:** Emídio Beula, Dimas Sinoa, Américo Maluana  
**Layout:** CDD

**Address:**  
 Rua de Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.  
 Telefone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD\_moz  
**E-mail:** info@cddmoz.org  
**Website:** http://www.cddmoz.org

PROGRAMMATIC PARTNER

FINANCING PARTNERS

